

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed November 7, 2006, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. Claims 1-20 were previously pending in this application. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8-10, 16 and 20 have been amended herein for clarity. New claims 21-25 have been added to more fully define Applicants' contribution to the art. As a result, claims 1-25 are currently pending for examination with claims 1, 8, 16 and 22 being independent. No new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

As a preliminary matter, Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 16-19 and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 4 and 20.

The Finality of the Office Action is Improper

The finality of the Office Action is improper under MPEP 706.07(a), which states:

Under present practice, second or any subsequent actions on the merits shall be final, except where the examiner introduces a new ground of rejection that is neither necessitated by applicant's amendment of the claims nor based on information submitted in an information disclosure statement....

The present Office Action mailed November 7, 2006 indicates that a new ground of rejection has been made in view of D'Oro. Applicants did not amend any claims or submit an information disclosure statement between the filing of the request for continued examination (RCE) on March 16, 2006 and the mailing of the present Office Action on November 7, 2006. Therefore, under MPEP 706.07(a), the Office Action mailed November 7 should not have been made final. Applicants respectfully request the finality of the Office Action be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office Action rejected claims 1-3, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by D'Oro et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,243,305. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration.

D'Oro describes a microwave coupler in which the length of each line is less than one quarter of the operating wavelength (Abstract). As illustrated in FIGS. 4A and 5 of D'Oro, a first terminal of a capacitor C1 is connected to the middle of conductive line La, with a second terminal of capacitor C2 being grounded.

By contrast, claim 1 as amended recites, *inter alia*, a first capacitor having a first capacitor terminal coupled to a first one of the two end terminals of the first conductive line and a second capacitor terminal coupled to a second one of the two end terminals of the first conductive line. D'Oro does not teach or suggest a first capacitor having a first capacitor terminal coupled to a first one of the two end terminals of the first conductive line and a second capacitor terminal coupled to a second one of the two end terminals of the first conductive line. Rather, as discussed above, D'Oro describes that a first terminal of capacitor C1 is connected to the middle of conductive line La and the second terminal of capacitor C1 is grounded. Therefore, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over D'Oro. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-7 depend from claim 1 and are therefore patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claim 8 as amended recites, *inter alia*, a first capacitor having a first capacitor terminal coupled to the first terminal of the first conductive line and a second capacitor terminal coupled to the second terminal of the first conductive line. D'Oro does not teach or suggest a first capacitor having a first capacitor terminal coupled to the first terminal of the first conductive line and a second capacitor terminal coupled to the second terminal of the first conductive line. Again, D'Oro describes that a first terminal of capacitor C1 is connected to the middle of conductive line La and the second terminal of capacitor C1 is grounded. Therefore, claim 8 patentably distinguishes over D'Oro. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-15 and 20 depend from claim 8 and are therefore patentable for at least the same reasons.

New Claims

New claim 22 recites:

A distributed coupler, comprising:
a first conductive line that carries a signal between two terminals of the first conductive line;
a second conductive line having two terminals comprising a third terminal and a fourth terminal, the second conductive line being coupled to the first conductive line such that the third terminal provides a first coupled signal that is a function of a magnitude of the signal flowing in a first direction on the first conductive line, and a fourth terminal that provides a second coupled signal that is a function of a magnitude of the signal flowing in a second direction on the first conductive line; and
a first capacitor coupled, via different terminals of the first capacitor, respectively, to the two terminals of the first conductive line or the two terminals of the second conductive line.

Claim 22 patentably distinguishes over D'Oro because D'Oro does not teach or suggest a first capacitor coupled, via different terminals of the first capacitor, respectively, to the two terminals of the first conductive line or the two terminals of the second conductive line.

Claims 23-25 depend from claim 22 and are therefore patentable for at least the same reasons.

CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if this communication does not place the case in condition for allowance.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

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Respectfully submitted,

By. 

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